

KIDERLEN-WACHTER, THE MAN OF AGADIR

A MONG the actors on the political stage of post-Bismarck-

-Txian Germany Kiderlen-Wachter occupies a place apart.¹

His robust and rather gross personality stands out from the

surrounding throng of shadowy figures, beloved by few,

disliked by many, ignored by none. To this day the question is

asked what he would have done had he been at the helm in

1914, and whether perchance he might have averted the rush

of the avalanche. The Swabian Bismarck, as Friedrich

Naumann called him, impressed his contemporaries as the

ablest and most forceful German diplomatist with the possible

exception of Marschall von Bieberstein. His admiring bio-

grapher and friend, Dr. Jaeckh, laments that he came too late

and went too soon. Less indulgent critics, while admitting

the exceptional ability of the man of Agadir, may be tempted to

exclaim : *Consensu omnium capax imperil nisi imperasset.*

Kiderlen-Wachter was born at Stuttgart in 1852, the son

of a high official at the Court of Wiirttemberg. To the end of

his life he was devotedly attached to the kind of his birth,

speaking its dialect, enjoying its peculiar dishes, loving its free

and easy ways. A short spell of war as a volunteer in 1870

separated school from University, and in 1879, after an inten-

sive study of law, he entered the Foreign Office. A • brief

apprenticeship in Copenhagen was followed by four years in

St. Petersburg, two in Paris and two in Constantinople.

Bismarck, who kept an eye on the promising young diploma-

tist, called him to the Wilhelmstrasse early in 1888 to deal

with questions of the Near East, and in the same summer

selected him to accompany the new Emperor as the representa-

tive of the Foreign Office on his summer cruise to the northern capitals. The arrangement initiated by the Iron Chancellor

¹ Kiderlen's diplomacy must be studied in the voluminous German, British, French, Austrian and Russian collections of documents. The official biography, Jaeckh's *Kiderlen-Wachter, Der Staatsmann tmd Mensch*, 2 vols., is too laudatory. The best short sketch is by Willy Andreas, *Karapfg urn Volk ttnd Rfifb* 153-186. Take Jonescu, *Souvenirs*; Otto Hammann, *Bilder aus der letyten Katser%tjf*; Rosen, *Aus einsm diplomatischen Wanderkben*; Von der Lancken, *Metne dreissig Dienstjahre*; Mme Tabouis, *Ufe of Jules Cambon*; Pick, *Searchlight on German Africa*; and Class, *Wider den Strom*, supply valuable information. The French side of the second Moroccan crisis is authoritatively presented in *Agadir*; and Tardieu, *Le Mystere d*Agadir*.